

**PROJECT SUMMARY****County:** Plumas**Applicant:** California Rangeland Trust**Project Title:** CRT Conservation Easement Grant Request - Goodwin Ranches**PROJECT GOAL**

Secure Grant from SNC to partially fund Conservation Easement acquisition costs for the Goodwin Ranches, a working cattle ranch located in the Sierra Valley, SNC North Central Sierra Sub-Region.

**PROJECT SCOPE**

The California Rangeland Trust (Rangeland Trust) is a California non-profit corporation whose mission is to conserve the open space, natural habitat and stewardship provided by California ranches. The Rangeland Trust currently holds conservation easements on over 184,000 acres throughout California. Of that, over 29,000 acres are located within the Sierra Nevada region, and was achieved by collaborating with organizations such as the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Nature Conservancy and Sierra Business Council.

Using the Rangeland Assessment Grant provided by SNC earlier in 2008, the Rangeland Trust has evaluated thirteen working cattle ranches within five of the six SNC Sub-regions, ranking them in terms of resource issues, cultural/historic issues, and economic/community issues. The Goodwin Ranches (Ranches) in Sierra County placed among the top four candidates, therefore, the Rangeland Trust wishes to hereby submit a Competitive Grant application to partially fund the acquisition of a conservation easement for these Ranches.

This 7,004-acre working cattle ranch is located in the southwestern part of Sierra Valley where the Rangeland Trust has already conserved over 29,000 acres in easements. The valley portion of the Ranch is meadow, hayland & rangeland while the upper portions include alpine meadows, riparian areas, sage brush steppe & pine forests. The Ranches are a major part of the Feather River Watershed providing important habitat for waterfowl, sandhill cranes, mule deer, black bear, trout, eagles, & native plants. The landowner desires to place 6,862 acres of the land into a conservation easement for the following reasons: 1) maintain the wildlife & wetland habitat values, 2) maintain the scenic qualities of the lands adjacent to the National Forests as well as the lands in the Sierra Valley, 3) maintain the cultural & historical values, 4) keep the Ranch free of subdivisions & ranchettes.

The larger project goal is to expand the conservation of the Sierra Valley area, which encompasses 100,000 acres in Plumas and Sierra Counties and is known as the largest alpine valley in North America. Including the conservation easements held by the Rangeland Trust, almost 34,000 acres are under conservation in addition to land owned by the United States Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. There are also approximately 50,000 acres in Sierra Valley that are under Williamson Act. This grant request along with the Rangeland Trust grant request for the Maddalena Ranch would add over 7,600 acres to this total, expanding the preservation of the Sierra Nevada's resources. (Refer to Sierra Valley Regional Map included under Tab 8)

The Rangeland Trust and the landowners have agreed upon conservation easement terms and the appraisal, which was funded by the Sierra Business Council, will be completed by September 30<sup>th</sup>. The Rangeland Trust will be applying to the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) to fund the balance of the acquisition. When funding is available and the due diligence tasks have been completed satisfactorily, the Rangeland Trust will close escrow thereby recording the Deed of Conservation Easement to be followed by an annual monitoring program.

### LETTERS OF SUPPORT

- California Cattlemen's Association, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Plumas Corporation

### SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Submit Grant Application to WCB	Oct 2008
<b>SNC Grant Authorization</b>	<b>Mar 2009</b>
Start: Escrow Instructions & Preliminary Title Report	May 2009
Complete Baseline Conditions Report	Sep 2009
Complete Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report	Sep 2009
Complete Conservation Easement Document & Monitoring Protocol	Oct 2009
<b>Submit Progress Report to SNC</b>	<b>Nov 2009</b>
Secure Funding from SNC	Dec 2009
Secure Funding from WCB	Dec 2009
Close Escrow and Record Conservation Easement	Dec 2009
Erect Signage and Send out Press Release	Jan 2010
<b>Final Report/Final Payment Request</b>	<b>Feb 2010</b>
Conduct First Annual Monitoring Visit	Jun 2010

### SNC PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Conservation Easement Acquisition Funds – SNC	\$ 873,000.00
Escrow Fees, Title Insurance, Closing Costs	\$ 6,000.00
Rangeland Trust Monitoring Endowment	\$ 65,000.00
Rangeland Trust Legal Defense Fund	\$ 10,000.00
Rangeland Trust Directly Related Administrative Costs	\$ 35,000.00
Rangeland Trust Performance Measures & Reporting	\$ 10,000.00
Rangeland Trust Hard Costs	\$ 1,000.00
<b>SNC GRANT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,000,000.00</b>
Appraisal Report (Paid by Sierra Business Council)	\$ 13,200.00
Due Diligence – Baseline Report, Phase I ESA Report	\$ 15,000.00
Conservation Easement Acquisition Funds – WCB	(estimates)
Sierra Valley Ranch	\$2,280,000.00
Clover Valley Ranch	\$2,347,000.00
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>	<b>\$5,655,200.00</b> (estimate)